



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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**MAYOR**  
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Christopher Brittan-Powell (Mayor Pro Tem)  
Shinita Hemby  
Faustino Menjivar  
Jason W. Papanikolas

## Work Session Minutes July 17 2023 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

### Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Also present were staff from Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Mr. Eric Tang from VHB(a contractor engaged by the County) and residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights. Staff present were Interim Town Manager Peter Jones and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen.

### Approval of the Agenda

CM Hemby moved to approve the agenda. CM Menjivar seconded. In discussion, Mayor Kulpa-Eddy requested an amended agenda item brought forth by ITM Jones to review the I.T. vendor RFQ. CM Hemby moved to approve the amended agenda. CM Menjivar seconded. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### 1. Mayor

#### a. Announcements

There were no announcements.

#### b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the upcoming calendar, which includes the Four Cities meeting and Town Manager interviews. There was discussion on moving the first worksession in August, but ultimately, the meeting will remain on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### c. M-NCPPC Walkable Bikeable Action Plan

Mr. Connor Klein from the M-NCPPC Planning Department reviewed that this project is the result of the Walkable Bikeable Berwyn Heights (WBBH) Task Force study. The Planning Assistance for Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) program is designed to give technical assistance to help achieve programs that are in line with the County's "Plan 2035". Mr. Eric Tang presented that the goal is to bring the projects from the WBBH study to reality. There are 11 recommendations in the WBBH plan, but the action plan will be focusing on four of the recommendations. He reviewed several of the WBBH recommendations, including improved lighting, traffic infraction enforcement, sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks, traffic calming, and user-activated traffic beacons. The focus areas of this action plan will be Ballew Ave, Pontiac Street (from 58<sup>th</sup> to BHES), Berwyn Rd between Charlton Ave and 60<sup>th</sup> Ave, and improvements at the steep downhill intersections of Quebec St./62<sup>nd</sup> Ave and Goucher

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Dr./Cunningham Dr. Mr. Tang reviewed the existing conditions at these locations and stated that they recognize that most of the crashes in Town are on Greenbelt Rd. He emphasized that the goal is to make roads safer for everyone. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about implementing stormwater management ideas alongside the recommendations. Resident Angie Wolfinger noted that all of the proposed sites run East/West across Town, when most of the through traffic comes from the North. Mr. James Wilkinson, co-chair of WBBH taskforce replied that they did look at N/S travel, and there was no intention to exclude those areas as places for improvement. Mr. Tang continued with more detailed current conditions of the areas of interest. Resident Jeff Knutson stated that stop signs don't work and noted a preference for passive controls, such as raised speed tables. He also expressed concern about Edmonston Road, with pedestrians walking to the 7-11. Susan Jones added that she finds Edmonston Road to be the scariest street in Town to walk, with no sidewalks and speeding vehicles. There was ongoing discussion on the safety of Edmonston and options for that area. Resident Jeff Bell asked why the intersection of Quebec St/Cunningham Ave was not being considered. Mr. Tang responded that these are meant to be pilot projects that could be expanded upon. Mr. Dave Wolfinger expressed that cyclists do not always follow traffic laws. Mr. Tang responded, highlighting the County's Vision Zero plan and the need to foster a culture of safety. MPT Brittan-Powell noted that the number of cars parked on the streets can also be problematic. Resident Justin McMullan stated that a few times a year there are groups of cyclists that come through Town along a recognized bike route and stated that there should be additional resources for that area. He also noted that sidewalk slopes and driveway aprons can make sidewalk utilization a challenge. Mr. Wilkinson spoke on behalf of bicyclists and stated that he does not believe enforcement would be the right way to go. Mr. Tang then reviewed the preliminary recommendations for each location, including a time frame, relative cost, and the challenges of each recommendation. One recommendation that was highlighted was to create a sidewalk directly on the road by demarking an area of the street, using striping or flexible bollards. He reviewed the remaining timeline for the action plan, which will include another presentation to Council and residents in November. Until then, residents can continue to send written comments to [connor.klein@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:connor.klein@ppd.mncppc.org). A final plan will be delivered in February of 2024.

Resident Susan Jones asked about streetlighting that was lost during the windstorm of 2022. Another resident stated that she sees the area on the backside of the school as a real challenge, where there are no sidewalks and there is heavy student traffic. Mr. Wolfinger expressed frustration with the comment that bicycles should not have the same traffic enforcement as cars. Mr. Bell stated that much of the bicycle traffic in Town likely comes from DC, where they have passed legislation stating bicycles do not have to stop at every sign, and he would not expect everyone to know the traffic laws in our community. He also commented that he would like to see real infrastructure changes on Ballew Avenue as he doesn't feel that sharrows do much. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about changes and manipulation of the road surface, such as rumble strips which would not impact pedestrians but would affect cars and bikes. Mr. Tang stated that there is often pushback on rumble strips as this creates noise for residents. CM Papanikolas asked about cost estimates and if funding would be available from the County to implement the plan. Mr. Tang replied that the final report will include general (not specific) cost estimates for the different elements of the plan. Mr. Klein stated that the plan does not come with implementation funding, but that having a County vetted

plan does make getting funding from the Department of Transportation and Public Works easier. Resident Angie Wolfinger asked about creating a safety culture when cyclists may not be residents. There was discussion on how it might be possible to work with neighboring municipalities on creating that culture of safety. Mr. Justin McMullan stated that he believes it should be the responsibility of the County or State to enforce safety in the communities in which they designate bike routes.

**d. ARPA Budget Amendment Discussion**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that at the last Town Meeting the latest ARPA budget was passed to ensure that the consensus items could move forward while there is a deeper dive into the project lists, with approximately \$1.7 million left to allocate. MPT Brittan-Powell stated there are many new items that will need to be discussed by Council. There was brief discussion on a few line items, but it was determined that the document needed to be gone over line item by line item to eliminate duplication. Council determined that this could be an administrative task and done outside of a meeting. Council will go over the list over the next two weeks in order to have discussion at the next worksession. A Councilmember will be prepared to speak on each line item. There was also conversation on how to prioritize the items, with MPT Brittan-Powell making argument for Placemaking to be prioritized and CM Hemby making argument for the projects for the Berwyn Heights Elementary School being prioritized. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he understood the funds have been obligated under Administration and that the reports have been filed with Treasury to state that. There was discussion regarding how detailed the “allocations” need to be and it was determined more clarification is needed. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy concluded that prioritization will likely be done based on the timeline in which projects need to be implemented.

**e. IT Vendor RFQ (amended agenda item)**

Council briefly discussed the process for proceeding with the RFQ for an IT vendor. The revised RFQ will be published with new deadlines based on the discussion.

**f. Resident Comments**

Paul Kavanaugh thanked the Council for the productive conversation on making the Town more walkable and bikeable. He added he believes that, beside the people, it is the commitment to sustainability in the community that makes it special. He stated he is glad to see the Council considering collaborating with the Green Team and the elementary school. He would like to encourage the Town to reach out to the UMD Environmental Finance Center for technical assistance grants for stormwater management, adding that climate change is a part of our lives and will be an ongoing issue.

MPT Brittan-Powell responded that once the Town is more situated there will be plans to reach out to the Environmental Finance Center.

Angie Wolfinger stated that she hasn't been to a meeting in quite some time and she sees a lot of specific things in the ARPA projects list and would like to know where they came from.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy responded that some of these come from the initial ARPA listening sessions and conversations with residents as well as input from the Town Committees. She stated another ARPA listening session might be in order. Ms. Wolfinger would like a date set before the upcoming summer events, like National Night Out and the summer concert at Sports Park. CM Papanikolas added that this list is basically a “brain dump of ideas”.

**2. Public Works**

There was no Public Works report.

**3. Administration**

MPT Brittan-Powell stated that stormwater and drainage are still ongoing issues and our residents are just as vulnerable as they were a year ago. There is still so much that needs to move forward. He also floated an idea of regular events where native plants are made available to residents.

**4. Code Compliance**

CM Hemby asked residents to keep in mind that there is a noise ordinance and gave suggestions on how to proceed when holding an event and when residents encounter violations, highlighting that Code Compliance can respond to calls during the day and the police department responds outside of regular business hours. She shared the yard signs the Town made to encourage residents to slow down and watch out for kids. She also encouraged residents to wear reflectors when walking at night, including on their pets. She added that Code is working on enforcement solutions for residents who do not pick up their pet waste. Finally, CM Hemby shared that Code Compliance is a source of information and to always call and ask if you need a permit before starting a project.

**5. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs (5 minutes)**

CM Papanikolas shared that he understands the frustration in the Town on the speed of stormwater management, but that the Council is moving at a comparatively rapid pace to other projects. He noted that the Council has had to educate themselves on how to use the funds. He asked that residents spread joy this summer.

**6. Public Safety**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy polled the Council on interest in attending a “Portadam” demonstration in College Park during the Fall.

**7. Adjournment**

CM Papanikolas moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Hemby seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:22pm.